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CHARLES SUMNER:

A EULOGY,

By GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS.

DELIVERED BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS,

IN THE BOSTON MUSIC HALL, ON THE 9TH OF JUNE, 1874.

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CHARLES SUMNER.

The prayer is said—the dirge is sung; from the waters of the Bay to the hills of Berkshire the funeral bells of the Commonwealth have tolled; the Congress of the United States, of which he was the oldest member in continuous service, has in both Houses spoken his praises—no voice more eloquent than that of his opponents; the race to whose elevation his life was consecrated has bewailed him with filial gratitude; this city, his birth-place and his home, has proudly mourned its illustrious citizen; the pulpit and the press every where in the land have blended sorrow and admiration; and now his native State, with all its honored magistracy—the State which gave him his great opportunity, clothing his words with the majesty of Massachusetts, so that when he spoke it was not the voice of a man, but of a commonwealth—lamenting a son so beloved, a servant so faithful, a friend so true, comes last of all to say farewell, and to deliver the character and career of Charles Sumner to history and the judgment of mankind. I know how amply, how eloquently, how tenderly, the story of his life has been told. In this place you heard it in words that spoke for the culture and the conscience of the country—for the prosperous and happy. And yonder in Faneuil Hall his eulogy fell from lips that must always glow when they mention him—lips that spoke for the most wronged and most unfortunate in the land, who never saw the face of Sumner, but whose children's children will bless his name forever. I might well hesitate to stand here if I did not know that, enriched by your sympathy, my words, telling the same tale, will seem to your generous hearts to prolong for a moment the requiem that you would not willingly let die.

Nor think the threefold strain superfluous. How well this universal eulogy—these mingling voices of various nativity, but all American—befits a man whose aims and efforts were universal; whom neither a city, nor a State, nor a party, nor a nation, nor a race bound with any local limitation! On a lofty hill overlooking the lake of Cayuga, in New York, stands a noble tree, in the grounds of the Cornell University, under which an Oxford scholar, choosing America for his home because America is the home of Liberty, has placed a seat upon which he has carved, "Above all nations is Humanity." That is the legend which Charles Sumner carved upon his heart, and sought to write upon the hearts of his fellow-citizens and of the world. And if at this moment my voice should suddenly sink into silence, I can believe that this hall would thrill and murmur with the last words he ever publicly spoke in Massachusetts, standing on this very spot: "Nor would I have my country forget at any time, in the discharge of its transcendent duties, that, since the rule of conduct and of honor is the same for nations as for individuals, the greatest nation is that which does most for humanity."

Amidst the general sorrow Massachusetts mourns him by the highest right, for with all the grasp of his hope and his cosmopolitan genius, perhaps for those very reasons, he was essentially a Massachusetts man. And here I touch the first great influence that moulded your Senator. This is the Puritan State, and the greatness of Sumner was the greatness of the Puritan genius—the greatness of moral power. Learning and culture and accomplishment; æsthetic taste and knowledge; the grace of society; the scholar's rich resource in travel; illustrious friendships in every land; the urbanity and charm of a citizen of the world—all these he had; all these you know; yet all these were but the velvet in which the iron Puritan hand was clad—the Puritan hand which in other days had smitten kings and dynasties hip and thigh; had saved civil and religious liberty in England; had swept the Mediterranean of pirates; had avenged the Lord's

> "slaughtered saints, whose bones
> Lie scattered on the Alpine mountains cold;"

the Puritan hand which, reaching out across the sea, sterner than the icy sternness of the New England shore, grasped a new continent, and wrought the amazing miracle of America.

The Puritan spirit, in the larger sense, enriched with many nationalities, broader, more generous, more humane, is the master influence of American civilization, and among all our public men it has no type so satisfactory and complete as Charles Sumner. He was the son of Massachusetts. By the fruit let the tree be judged. The State to whose hard coast the *Mayflower* came, and upon whose rocks it dropped its seed—the State in which the mingled Puritan and Pilgrim spirit has been most active—is today the chief of commonwealths. It is the community in which the average of well-be-

ing is higher than in any state we know in history. Puritan in origin though it be, it is more truly liberal and free than any similar community in the world. The fig and the pomegranate and the almond will not grow there, nor the nightingale sing, but nobler blossoms of the old human stock than its most famous children the sun never shone upon; nor has the liberty-loving heart of man heard sweeter music than the voices of James Otis and Samuel Adams, of John Adams and Joseph Warren, of Josiah Quincy and Charles Sumner. Surely I may say so, born in the State that Roger Williams founded—Roger Williams, the prophet whom Massachusetts stoned.

Into this State and these influences Charles Sumner was born sixty-three years ago, while as yet the traditions of colonial New England were virtually unchanged. Here were the town-meeting, the constable, the common school, the training-day, the general intelligence, the morality, the habit of self-government, the homogeneity of population, the ample territory, the universal instinct of law. Here was the full daily practice of what De Tocqueville afterward called the two or three principal ideas which form the basis of the social theory of the United States, and which seemed to make a republic possible, practicable, and wise. It was one of the good fortunes of Sumner's life that, born amidst these influences, he used to the utmost the advantage of school and college. To many men youth itself is so sweet a siren that in hearing her song they forget all but the pleasure of listening to it. But the sibyl saved no scroll from Sumner; he had the wisdom to seize them all. His classmates, gayly returning late at night, saw the studious light shining in his window. The boy was hard at work, already in those plastic years storing his mind and memory, which seemed indeed an "inability to forget," with the literature and historic lore which gave his later discourse such amplitude and splendor of illustration that, like a royal robe, it was stiff and cumbrous and awkward with exaggerated richness of embroidery. He never lost this vast capacity of work, and his life had no idle hours. Long afterward, when he was in Paris, recovering from the blow in the Senate, ordered not to think or read, and daily, as his physician lately tells us, undergoing a torture of treatment which he refused to mitigate by anæsthetics, simply unable to do nothing, he devoted himself to the study and collection of engravings, in which he became an expert. And I remember in the midsummer of 1871, when he remained, as was his custom, in Washington, after the city was deserted by all but its local population, and when I saw him daily, that he rose at seven in the morning, and with but a slight breakfast at nine, sat at his desk in the library hard at work until five in the afternoon. It was his vacation: the weather was tropical; and he was sixty years old. The renowned Senator at his post was still the solitary midnight student of the college.

But other influences mingled in his education, and helped to mould the man. While his heart burned with the tale of Plutarch's heroes, with the story of ancient states, and the politics of Greece and Rome and modern Europe, he lived in this historic city, and was therefore familiar with many of the most inspiring scenes of our American story. I know not if the people of this neighborhood are always conscious of the hallowed ground upon which they daily tread. We who come hither from other States, pilgrims to the cradle of American independence, are moved by emotions such as we can not elsewhere feel. Here is the "Old South" Meeting-house—and here may it long remain!—where, however changed, still in imagination Sam Adams calls the Sons of Liberty to their duty. There is the old State-house where James Otis, with electric eloquence, brings a continent to its feet. Beneath is the ground where Crispus Attucks fell. Beyond is Faneuil Hall, the plainest and most reverend political temple now standing in the world, and upon the principles which are its inseparable traditions has been founded the most humane republic in history. There is the Old North steeple, on which Paul Revere's lantern lights the land to independence. Below is the water on which the scarlet troops of Percy and of Howe glitter in the June sunshine of ninety-nine years ago; and lo! memorial of a battle lost and a cause won, the tall gray melancholy shaft on Bunker Hill rises—rises "till it meets the sun in his coming, while the earliest light of morning gilds it, and parting day lingers and plays on its summit."

These scenes, as well as his books and college, were the school of Sumner; and as the tall and awkward youth, dreaming of Marathon and Arbela, of Sempach and Morgarten, walked on Bunker Hill, and his eyes wandered over peaceful fields and happy towns to Concord and Lexington, doubt not that the genius of his native land whispered to him that all knowledge and the highest training and the purest purpose were but the necessary equipment of the ambition that would serve in any way a country whose cause in his own day, as in the day of Bunker Hill, was the cause of human nature. Charles Sumner was an educated man, a college-bred man, as all the great revolutionary leaders of Massachusetts were; and he knew, as every intelligent man knows, that from the day when Themistocles led the educated Athenians at Salamis to that when Von Moltke marshaled the educated Germans against France, the sure foundations of states are laid in knowledge, not in ignorance, and that every sneer at education, at cultivation, at book-learning, which is the recorded wisdom of the experience of mankind, is the demagogue's sneer at intelligent liberty, inviting national degeneration and ruin.

Sumner was soon at the Law School the

favorite pupil of that accomplished magistrate Judge Story, the right-hand of Marshall, to whom in difficult moments the great Webster turned for law. But the character of his legal studies when, a little later, he was lecturing at the Law School—for he spoke chiefly of constitutional law and the law of nations—showed even then the bent of his feeling, the vague reaching out toward the future, the first faint hints and foreshowings of his own ultimate career. Could it have been revealed to him in that modest lecture-room at Cambridge as he was unfolding to a few students the principles of international law, which in its full glory he believed to be nothing less than the science of the moral relations of states to each other, that one day in the Senate of the United States, and in its chief and most honorable place, he should plead for the practical application of the principles which he cherished, a recognized authority, and himself one of the lawgivers whom he had described as the reformers of nations and the builders of human society, how well might he have seen that culmination of his career as the most secret hope of his heart fulfilled! But again, as he stood there, could he have seen as in a vision that one day also he should stand in that Senatorial arena in deadly conflict with crime against humanity—a conflict that shook the continent and arrested the world—and as a general upon the battle-field marshals all his forces, holding his swift and glittering lines in hand—his squadrons and regiments and artillery, his skirmishers and reserves, massing and dispersing at his supreme will, and at last, snatching all his force, hurls it at the foe in one blasting bolt of fire and victory—so he, in that other and greater field, should gather up all the accumulated resources of his learning, all the training of the law, all the deep instincts and convictions of his conscience, and hurl them in one blazing and resistless mass in the very forefront of that mighty debate that flamed into civil war, melting four millions of chains, and regenerating a nation—could all this have been revealed to him, I doubt if he could have prepared himself for the great part that he was to play with more conscience or more care.

Then to the influences that made the man was added a residence in Europe. He returned a polished cosmopolitan; a learned youth who had sat upon the bench in Westminster Hall, and taught the judges the rulings of their own courts; who had mingled on equal terms in the bouts of lettered wit, no longer at the Mermaid, but at Holland House, and the breakfast-rooms of accomplished scholars in London and Paris and Berlin and Rome. He returned knowing almost every man and woman of renown in Europe, and he brought back what he carried away —a stainless purity of life and loftiness of aim, the habit of incessant work, which was the law of his being, and the tastes of a jurist, but not those of a practicing lawyer. His look, his walk, his dress, his manner, were not those of the busy advocate, but of the cultivated and brilliant man of society—the Admirable Crichton of the saloons. He was oftener seen in the refined circles of the city, in the libraries and dining-rooms of Prescott and Quincy, of Bancroft and Ticknor, than in the courts of law. Distinguished foreigners, constantly arriving, brought him letters, and he took them to the galleries and the college. But while he sauntered, he studied. In his office he was diligently editing great works of law; not practicing at the bar, for, indeed, he was not formed for a jury lawyer, where the jury was less than a nation, or mankind. The electric agility, the consummate tact, the readiness for every resource, the humor that brightens or withers, the command of the opposite point of view, the superficial ardor, the facility of simulation that makes the worse appear the better reason, the passionate gust and sweep of eloquent appeal—these were lacking, and wanting these, he did not seek the laurels of the jury advocate. Sumner's legal mind at this time, and throughout his life, was largely moulded, trained to the contemplation of great principles and to lofty research. As one of his admiring comrades, himself a renowned lawyer, says of him, "In sporting terms, he had a good eye for country, but no scent for a trail." The movement of his mind was grand and comprehensive. He spoke naturally, not in subtle and dextrous pleas, but in stately and measured orations.

When he returned from Europe he was thought to have been too much fascinated by England, and throughout his life it was sometimes said that he was still inthralled by his admiration for that country. But what is more natural to an American than love of England? Does not Hawthorne instinctively call it "Our old Home?" The Pilgrims came to plant a purer England, and their children, the colonists, took up arms to maintain a truer England, but an England still. They became independent, but they did not renounce their race nor their language, and their victory left them the advanced outpost of English political progress and civilization. The principles that we most proudly maintain to-day, those to which Sumner's whole life was devoted, are English traditions. The great muniments of individual liberty in every degree descended to us from our fathers. The Commonwealth, justice as the political corner-stone, the rule of the constitutional majority, the habeas corpus, the trial by jury, freedom of speech and of the press—these are English, and they are ours. I do not agree with the melancholy Fisher Ames that "the immortal spirit of the wood-nymph Liberty dwells only in the English oak;" but the most patriotic American may well remember that individual freedom sometimes seems almost surer and sturdier in England than here, and may wisely repair to drink at those elder fountains. No English man in

this generation has more influenced the thought of his country than John Stuart Mill, and the truest American will find upon his heroic pages gleams of a fairer and ampler America than ever in vision even Samuel Adams saw. No, no. Plymouth Rock was but a stepping-stone from one continent to another in the great march of the same historic development, and to-day, with electric touch, we grasp the hand of England under the sea that the tumult of the ocean may not toss us further asunder, but throb as the beating of one common heart. Is it strange, then, that the young lawyer whose deepest instinct was love of freedom, and whose youth had been devoted to the study of that noble science whose highest purpose is to defend individual right, after long residence in the land of John Selden, of Coke, of Mansfield, of Blackstone, of Romilly, as well as of Shakespeare and Bacon, of Newton and Jeremy Taylor—a land which had appealed in every way to his heart, his mind, his imagination, whose history had inspired, whose learning had armed him to be a liberator of the oppressed—should always have turned with admiration to the country "where," as her laureate sings—

> "Where freedom broadens slowly down
> From precedent to precedent?"

Such were the general influences that moulded the young Sumner. But to what a situation in his own country he returned! —a situation neither understood nor suspected by the fastidious and elegant circles which received him. The man never lived who enjoyed more or was more fitted to enjoy the higher delights of human society than Sumner, or who might have seemed to those who scanned his habits and his tastes so little adapted for the heroic part. Could the scope and progress and culmination of the great contest which had already begun have been foreseen and measured, Charles Sumner would probably have been selected as the type of the cultivated and scholarly gentleman who would recoil from the conflict as Sir Thomas Browne shunned the stern tumult of the Great Rebellion.

In speaking of that conflict I shall speak plainly; I hope to speak truly. To turn to Mr. Sumner's public career is to open a chapter of our history written in fire and closed in blood, but which we must be willing to recall if we would justly measure the man. Trained in his own expectation for other ends, framed for friendship, for gentleness, for professional and social ease, and the placid renown of letters, he was suddenly caught up into the stormy cloud, and his life became a strife that filled a generation. But during all that tremendous time, on the one hand enthusiastically trusted, on the other contemptuously scorned and hated, his heart was that of a little child. He said no unworthy word, he did no unmanly deed; dishonor fled his face; and to-day those who so long and so naturally but so wrongfully believed him their enemy strew rosemary for remembrance upon his grave.

Down to the year 1830 the moral agitation against slavery in this country smouldered. But in that year Benjamin Lundy touched with fire the soul of William Lloyd Garrison, and that agitation burst out again irrepressibly. You remember—who can forget?—the passionate onset of the Abolitionists. It was conscience rising in insurrection. They made their great appeal with the ardor of martyrs and the zeal of primitive Christians. Fifth-monarchy men, ranters, Anabaptists, were never more repugnant to their times than they, and they became the prey of the worst and most disorderly passions. The abolition missionaries were mobbed, imprisoned, maimed, murdered, but still, as in the bitter days of Puritan persecution in Scotland the undaunted voices of the Covenanters were heard singing hymns that echoed and re-echoed from peak to peak of the barren mountains until the great dumb wilderness was vocal with praise, so the solemn appeal of the Abolitionists to the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence echoed from solitary heart to heart until the land rang with the litany of liberty. In politics the discussion had been stamped out like a threatening fire upon the prairie whenever it arose. But soon after Mr. Sumner's return from Europe this, too, flamed out afresh in the attempted annexation of Texas. Early in 1845 the plan was consummated. Mr. Sumner was a Whig, but then and always he was above all a man. He was too well versed in the history of freedom not to know that the great victories over despotism and slavery in every form had been won by united action, and he knew that united action implies organization and a party. But while great political results are to be gained by means of great parties, he knew that a party which is too blind to see or too cowardly to acknowledge the real issue, which pursues its ends, however noble, by ignoble means, which tolerates corruption, which trusts unworthy men, which suffers the public service to be prostituted to personal ends, defies reason and conscience, and summons all honest men to oppose it. When conscience goes, all goes; and wherever conscience went, Charles Sumner followed. It took him out of those delightful drawing-rooms and tranquil libraries; it drew him away from old companions and cherished friends; it exposed him to their suspicion, their hostility, their scorn; it forbade him the peaceful future of his dreams and expectations; it placed him at the fiery heart of the fiercest conflict of the century; it hedged his life with insults and threats and plots of assassination; it bared his head to the dreadful blow that struck him senseless to the Senate floor, and sent him a tortured wanderer beyond the sea; later it separated him from the co-operation of colleagues, and severed him from his party; and at last it exposed him, sick in body and in mind, to

the blow that wounded his soul, the censure of his beloved Massachusetts. But he did not quail; he did not falter; he showed himself still to be her worthy son. Wherever conscience went, Charles Sumner followed. "God help me!" cried Martin Luther, "I can no other." "God help me!" said Charles Sumner, "I must do my duty."

The Whigs are, or ought to be, he said, in 1845, the party of freedom. But when they refused to recognize the real contest in the country by rejecting in their National Convention of 1848 the Wilmot Proviso, Mr. Sumner went with the other Conscience Whigs to Worcester, and organized the Free-soil party; and when, in the winter of 1850–51, the Legislature of Massachusetts was to elect the successor of Daniel Webster in the Senate of the United State, the Free-soil chiefs, as upright, able, and patriotic a body of political leaders as ever Massachusetts had, deliberately selected Mr. Sumner as their candidate—a selection which showed the estimate of the man by those who knew him most intimately, and who most thoroughly understood the times. He was young, strong, learned, variously accomplished, a miracle of industry, zealous, pure, of indomitable courage, and of supreme moral energy. But he had little political ambition, and in 1846 had peremptorily declined to be a candidate for Congress. He was not a member of either of the great parties. He would not make any pledge of any kind, or move his tongue, or wink his eye, to secure success. He was pledged then and always and only to his sense of right. He stood for no partisan end whatever, but simply and solely for uncompromising resistance to slavery. The contest of the election was long; it lasted for three months, and on the 24th of April, 1851, he was elected. "I accept," he said, "as the servant of Massachusetts, mindful of the sentiments uttered by her successive Legislatures, of the genius which inspires her history, and of the men, her perpetual pride and ornament, who breathed into her that breath of liberty which early made her an example to her sister States." How these lofty words lift us out of the grossness of public corruption and incapacity into the air of ideal states and public men! What a stately summons are they to his beloved Massachusetts once more to take the lead, and again to guide her sister States to greater political purity and the ancient standards of public character and service!

The hour in which Mr. Sumner wrote those words, the hour of his entrance upon public life, was the darkest of our history. But if his mind had turned regretfully to that tranquil career of his earlier anticipation, how well might his good genius have whispered to him what the flower of English gentlemen and scholars had written three hundred years before, "To what purpose should our thoughts be directed to various kinds of knowledge unless room be afforded for putting it into practice, so that public advantage may be the result?" Or that other strain, full of the music of a consecrated soul, in which Philip Sidney writes to his father-in-law, Walsingham, "I think a wise and constant man ought never to grieve while he doth play, as a man may say, his own part truly."

What, then, was the political situation when Mr. Sumner entered the Senate? Slavery had apparently subdued the country. Grand Juries in the Northern States presented citizens who in time of peace wished to discuss vital public questions as guilty of sedition. The Legislatures were summoned to make their speeches indictable offenses. In the Legislature of Rhode Island such a bill was reported. The Governor of New York favored such a law. The Governor of Ohio delivered a citizen of that State to the authorities of another to be tried for helping a slave to escape. The Governor of Massachusetts said that all discussion of the subject which tended to incite insurrection had been held to be indictable. Every great national office was then, and long had been, held by the ministers of slavery. The American embassadors in Europe were every where silent, or smoothly apologized. Every committee in Congress was the servant of slavery, and when the Vice-President left his seat in the Senate it was filled by another like himself. All the attendants who stood around him, the door-keepers, messengers, sergeants-at-arms, down to the very pages who noiselessly skimmed the floor, were selected by its agents. Beyond the superb walls of the Capitol, which Senator Benton had long solemnly warned the country was built by permission of that Supreme Power which would seize and occupy it when the time came, the whole vast system of national offices was within the patronage of slavery. Every little post-office, every custom-house clerkship, was a bribe to silence, while the Postmaster-General of the United States robbed the mails at its bidding. When Sumner entered the Senate the most absolute subserviency to slavery was decreed as the test of nationality, and that power did not hesitate to declare that any serious effort, however lawfully made, to change its policy would strike the tocsin of civil war. Meanwhile, at the very moment of his election, the horrors of the Fugitive Slave Law had burst upon thousands of innocent homes. Mothers snatched their children and fled, they knew not whither. Brave men, long safe in recovered liberty, were seized for no crime but misfortune, and hurried to their doom. Young men and girls who had been always free, always residents of their own States, were kidnaped and sold. The anguish, the sublime heroism, of this ghastly persecution fills one of the most tragical and most inspiring epochs of our story. Even those who publicly sustained the law from a sense of duty secretly helped the flying fugitives upon their way. The human heart is stronger than sophistry. The man who impatiently ex-

claimed that of course the law was hard, but it was the law, and must be obeyed, suddenly felt the quivering, panting fugitive clinging to his knees, guilty of no crime, and begging only the succor which no honest heart would refuse a dog cowering upon his threshold; and as he heard the dread power thundering at the door, "I am the Law, give me my prey!" in the same moment he heard God knocking at his heart, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me!"

Those days are passed. That fearful conflict is over; and the flowers just strewn all through these sorrowing States, indiscriminately upon the graves of the blue and the gray, show how truly it is ended. Heaven knows I speak of it with no willingness, with no bitterness; but how can I show you Charles Sumner if I do not show you the time that made him what he was? This was the political and moral situation of the country when he took the oath as Senator, on the 1st of December, 1851. The famous political triumvirate of the former generation was gone. Mr. Calhoun, the master-will of the three, had died in the previous year. Mr. Webster was Secretary of State; and Henry Clay, with fading eye and bowed frame and trembling voice—Henry Clay, Compromise incarnate—feebly tottered out of the chamber as Charles Sumner, Conscience incarnate, came in. As he took the oath the new triumvirate was complete, for Mr. Seward and Mr. Chase had taken their seats two years before. For some months Mr. Sumner did not speak upon the great topic, and many of his friends at home thought him keeping silence too long, half fearing that he too had been enchanted by the woful Circe of the South. They did not know how carefully slavery prevented him from finding an opportunity. A month before he could get the floor for his purpose, Theodore Parker said, in a public speech, "I wish he had spoken long ago.....But it is for him to decide, not for us. 'A fool's bolt is soon shot,' while a wise man often reserves his fire." At length, on the 26th of August, 1852, after many efforts to be heard, Mr. Sumner obtained the floor, saying as he arose, "The subject is at last broadly before the Senate, and by the blessing of God it shall be discussed."

This first great speech upon the repeal of the Fugitive Slave Law was the most significant event in the Senate since Mr. Webster's reply to Hayne, and an epitome of Mr. Sumner's whole public career. It was one of the words that are events, and from which historical epochs take their departure. These are strong words. See if they are justified. The slavery debate was certainly the most momentous that had ever occurred in the country, and brave words had been already uttered for freedom. The subtle and sanguine and sagacious Seward had spoken often and wisely. The passionless Chase, with massive and Websterian logic, had pressed his solid reasoning home; and the gay humor of Hale had irradiated his earnest and strenuous appeals. But all of these men were known to their colleagues as members of parties, as politicians, as men of political ambition. With such elements and men slavery was accustomed to deal. Carefully studying the Senator from New York, it saw, with the utmost purity of character, trained ability, acute political instinct, and partisan habit, the intellectual optimist who grasped the situation with his brain rather than with his heart and conscience. It tested him by its own terrible earnestness. It weighed him in the balance of its own unquailing and uncompromising resolution, and found him wanting. Do not misunderstand me. Mr. Seward was the only political leader for whom I have ever felt the admiring loyalty which older men felt for Webster and Calhoun and Clay. His career has been nobly set forth by your own distinguished citizen, Mr. Adams, in his discourse before the Legislature of New York. And as he went to Albany to say what he believed to be the truth, so have I come hither. Slavery knew Mr. Seward to be accustomed to political considerations, to party necessities, to the claims of compromise. It knew the scope of his political philosophy, the brightness of his hope of American glory under the Union, the steady certainty of his trust that all would be well. Even if, like Webster and Calhoun and Clay, he saw the gathering storm, he thought—and he did not conceal his thought—that he had the confidence of his opponents, and could avert or control the tempest. Slavery knew that he could not. If he proudly declared the higher law, slavery knew that he did it, as Plato announced the Golden Rule, as a thinker, not as an actor; as a philosopher, not as the founder of a religion ready to be sealed with fire and blood. But this was the very spirit of slavery, and it did not see it to be his.

In the midst of a speech which logically cut the ground from beneath the slave interest, and calmly foretold the blessing of the emancipation that was unavoidable, Mr. Seward would sometimes turn and hold out his fingers for a pinch of snuff toward some Southern Senator, who, turning away his face, offered him the box. When the Senate adjourned, Mr. Seward would perhaps join the same colleague to stroll home along the Avenue as if they had been country lawyers coming from a court where they had been arguing a dry point of law. It showed how imperfectly he felt or how inadequately he measured the sullen intensity and relentless purpose of the spirit which dominated our politics, and would pause at nothing in its course. In a word, that spirit was essentially revolutionary, and Mr. Seward had not a revolutionary fibre in his being. Long afterward, when the movement of secession had begun, as he walked with a fellow-Sen-

ator to the Capitol on the morning of Washington's birthday, he saw on all sides the national flags fluttering in the sun, and exclaimed to his companion, with triumphant incredulity, "Look there! see those flags! and yet they talk of disunion!"

Up to the moment of Mr. Sumner's appearance in the Senate Mr. Seward had been the foremost antislavery leader in public life. But slavery, carefully studying him, believed, as I think, that he would compromise. That was the test. If he would compromise, he might annoy, but he was not to be feared. If he would compromise, he might melodiously sing the glory of the Union at his pleasure. If he would compromise, he would yield. If he were not as invincibly resolute as slavery, he was already conquered; and he was the leader of the North. There sat Seward in the Senate —yes, and there Webster had sat, there Clay had sat, with all their great and memorable service; there in its presiding chair Millard Fillmore had sat; and over them all slavery had stalked straight on in its remorseless imperial career. And if, as Mr. Seward's most able eulogist mournfully remarks, he was permitted at last to leave public life "with fewer marks of recognition of his brilliant career than he would have had if he had been the most insignificant of our Presidents," may it not be that, without questioning his generous character, his lofty ability, and his illustrious service, there was a general feeling that in the last administration under which he served he had seemed in some degree to justify the instinct of slavery, that his will was not as sternly inexorable as its own?

I do not, of course, forget that compromise makes government possible, and that the Union was based upon it. "All government," says Burke, "is founded upon compromise and barter.....But," he adds, "in all fair dealing the thing bought must bear some proportion to the purchase paid. None will barter away the immediate jewel of the soul." So Sir James Mackintosh said of Lord Somers, whom he described as the perfect model of a wise statesman in a free community, that "to be useful he submitted to compromise with the evil that he could not extirpate." But it is the instinct of the highest statesmanship to know when the jewel of which Burke speaks is demanded, and to resolve that at any cost it shall not be sold. John Pym had it when he carried up to the Lords the impeachment of Strafford. John Adams had it when he lifted the Continental Congress in his arms and hurled it over the irrevocable line of independence. Charles Sumner had it when, at the close of his first great speech in the Senate, he exclaimed, in the face of slavery in its highest seat, "By the Constitution which I have sworn to support, I am bound to disobey this act." Until that moment slavery had not seen in public life the man whom it truly feared. But now, amazed, incredulous, appalled, it felt that it had met its master. Here was a spirit as resolute and haughty as its own, with resources infinitely richer. Here at last was the North, the American conscience, the American will—the heir of the traditions of English Magna Charta, and, far beyond them, of the old Swiss cantons high on the heaven-kissing Alps—the spirit that would not wince, nor compromise, nor bend, but which, like a cliff of adamant, said to the furious sea, "Here shall thy proud waves be stayed."

Ten years afterward, when States were seceding and preparing to secede—when the reluctant mind of the North began to see that war was possible—when even many of Mr. Sumner's and Mr. Seward's party friends trembled in dismay, Mr. Seward ended his last speech in the Senate, a guarded plea for the Union, by concessions which amazed many of his most earnest friends. I know that he thought it the part of a wise statesmanship that he who was to be the head of the new administration should retain if possible the support of the opposition of the North by shunning every thing like menace, and by speaking in the most temperate and conciliatory tone. But his mournful concluding words, "I learned early from Jefferson that in political affairs we can not always do what seems to us absolutely best," sounded at that time and under those circumstances like a mortal cry of defeat and surrender. And at the very time that Mr. Seward was speaking those words, Mr. Sumner was one evening surprised by a visit in Washington from a large number of the most conspicuous citizens of Boston, all of whom had been among his strongest and most positive political opponents. He welcomed them gravely, seeing that their purpose was very serious, and after a few moments the most distinguished member of the party made an impassioned appeal to the Senator. "You know us all," he said, "as fellow-citizens of yours who have always and most strongly regretted and opposed your political course. But at this awful moment, when the country hangs upon the edge of civil war—and what civil war means you know—we believe that there is one man only who can avert the threatening calamity, one man whom the North really trusts, and by whose counsels it will be guided. We believe that you are that man. The North will listen to you and to no other, and we are here in the name of humanity and civilization to implore you to save your country." The speaker was greatly affected, and after a moment Mr. Sumner said: "Sir, I am surprised that you attribute to me such influence. I will, however, assume it. Be it so. What, then, is it that you would have me do?" "We implore you, Mr. Sumner, as you love your country and your God, to vote for the Crittenden compromise." "Sir," said Charles Sumner, rising to his lofty height, and never more Charles Sumner than in that moment, "if what you

say is indeed true, and if at this moment the North trusts me, as you think, beyond all others, it is because the North knows that under no circumstances whatever would I compromise."

It was precisely because slavery recognized this when he made his first important speech, and felt for the first time the immense force behind his words, that I call that speech so significant an event. I do not claim for Sumner deeper convictions or a sterner will than those of many of his associates. But the Abolitionists, however devoted and eloquent, were only private citizens and agitators who abjured political methods. They seemed to the supreme influence in the government a band of pestilent fanatics. But Charles Sumner in the Senate, Charles Sumner in the seat of Daniel Webster, saying that the Constitution forbade him to obey the Fugitive Slave Law, was not an individual; he was a representative man. No meeting of enthusiastic men and women in a school-house had sent him to the Senate, but the Legislature of a State. Nor that alone, for that Legislature had not sent him as the representative of a party, but of an idea—an idea which had been powerful enough to hold its friends close together through a contest of three months, and at last defeating the influences which had so long controlled unquestioned the polities of the State, had lifted into the Senate a man pledged only to cry *Delenda est Carthago*, and who, by the law of his mental and moral structure, could no more compromise the principle at stake than he could tell a lie. Still further, slavery heard the young Senator proudly assert that the Constitution did not recognize slavery, except in the slave-trade clause, whose force was long since spent; that the clause upon which the Fugitive Law was grounded was a mere compact conferring no power, and that every detail of the process provided was flagrantly and palpably unconstitutional. Slavery, he insisted, was sectional, liberty was national; and throwing this popular cry to the country, he irradiated his position with so splendid an illumination of illustration, precedent, argument, appeal, that it shone all over the land. How like a sunrise it strengthened and stimulated and inspired the North! It furnished the quiver of a thousand orators and newspapers, and was an exhaustless treasury of resources for the debate. Above all, it satisfied men bred in reverence of law that their duty as citizens was coincident with the dictates of their consciences, and that the Constitution justified them in withstanding the statute which their souls loathed.

This was the very service that the country needed at that time; and that no dramatic effect should be wanting, as Henry Clay had left the Senate for the last time on the day that Mr. Sumner was sworn in, so, as he was making his first great plea for justice under the Constitution, his predecessor, Daniel Webster, then Secretary of State, came into the Chamber, and also for the last time. I know no more impressive scene. There is the old Senator, then the chief figure in America, who, a year before, on the 7th of March, had made his last speech supporting the policy of the Fugitive Slave Bill, and against the Wilmot Proviso. Worn, wasted, sad, with powers so great and public service so renowned, the Olympian man who had sought so long, so ably, so vainly, to placate the implacable, his seventy years ending in baffled hopes and bitter disappointment and a broken heart, gazed with those eyes of depthless melancholy upon his successor. And here stands that successor, with the light of spotless youth upon his face, towering, dauntless, radiant; the indomitable Puritan, speaking as a lawyer, a statesman, and a man, not for his State alone, nor for his country only, but for human rights every where and always, forecasting the future, heralding the new America. As Webster looked and listened, did he recall the words of that younger man seven years before in Faneuil Hall, when he prayed the party that Webster led to declare for emancipation? Did he remember the impassioned appeal to himself, that as he had justly earned the title of Defender of the Constitution, so now he should devote his marvelous powers to the overthrow of slavery, and thereby win a nobler name? Alas! it was demanding dawn of the sunset! It was beseeching yesterday to return to-morrow. It was imploring Daniel Webster to be Charles Sumner. No, fellow-citizens, in that appeal Sumner forecast his own glory. "Assume, then," cried he, "these unperformed duties. The aged shall bear witness to you; the young shall kindle with rapture as they repeat the name of Webster; the large company of the ransomed shall teach their children and their children's children to the latest generation to call you blessed, and you shall have yet another title, never to be forgotten on earth or in heaven, Defender of Humanity."

I dwell upon this first great speech of Mr. Sumner's in the Senate, because it illustrates his own public qualities and character, his aims and his methods. He began to take an official part in affairs when all questions were determined by a single interest, a single policy, and all issues grew out of that. His nature was so transparent and simple, and the character of his relation to his time so evident, that there is but one story to tell. All his greater speeches upon domestic topics after that of August, 1852, were but amplifications of the theme. The power that he had defied did not relax, but redoubled its efforts to subdue the country to its will, and every new attempt found Sumner with more practiced powers, with more comprehensive resources, ready and eager for the battle. For the whole of his active career, before, during, and after the war, his work was substantially the same. He was essen-

tially an orator and a moral reformer, and with unsurpassed earnestness of appeal, emphasized from first to last by the incalculable weight of his commanding character, his work was to rouse and kindle and inspire the public opinion of the country to his own uncompromising hostility to slavery. In this crusade he traversed the land, as it were, by his speeches, a new Peter the Hermit, and by his sincerity, his unconquerable zeal, his affluent learning, making history and literature and art tributary to his purpose, he entered the houses and hearts and minds of the people of the Northern States, and fanned the flame of a holy hatred of the intolerable and audacious wrong. It was indispensable to this work that he should not be able to admit any qualification of its absorbing necessity or any abatement of the urgency with which it must be pursued. Once in later days, when I argued with him that opponents might be sincere, and that there was some reason on the other side, he thundered in reply, "Upon such a question there *is* no other side!" The time required such a leader—a man who did not believe that there was another side to the question, who would treat difference of opinion almost as moral delinquency; and the hour found the man in Sumner.

For see what the leadership of opinion in this country then demanded. In the first place, and for the reasons I have mentioned—the instinct, traditions, and habits of the dominant race in our civilization—such a leader must be a man who showed that the great principles of liberty, but of liberty under law, of what we call regulated liberty, were on his side; whose familiarity with the Constitution and with constitutional interpretation, and whose standing among lawyers who dealt with the comprehensive spirit and purpose of the law, was recognized and commanding, so that, instructed by him, the farmer in the field, the mechanic in the shop, the traveler by the way—all law-loving Americans every where, could maintain the contest with their neighbors point by point upon the letter of the Constitution, and show, or think they showed, that the supreme law in its intention, in the purpose of its authors, by the unquestionable witness of the time, demanded an interpretation and a statute in favor of liberty. Then, in the second place, this leader must be identified with a political party, for the same instinct which seeks the law and leans upon precedent acts through the organization of parties. The Free-soil sentiment that sent Sumner to the Senate was the real creative force in our politics at that time. It had a distinct organization in several States. It had nominated Presidential candidates at Buffalo; and although the Whig and Democratic were still the great parties, the Free-soil principle was necessarily the nucleus around which a new and truly national party must presently gather. In 1852 the common enemy silenced the Whig party, which almost instantly dissolved as a powerful element in politics, and the Republican party arose. No man had done more to form the opinion and deepen the conviction from which it sprang than Sumner; no man accepted its aid with more alacrity, or saw more clearly its immense opportunity. As early as September, 1854, he declared in the State Convention of his political friends, "As Republicans we go forth to encounter the oligarchs of slavery;" and eighteen years afterward, in warning the party against what he thought to be a fatal course, he said that he had been one of the straitest of the sect, who had never failed to sustain its candidates or to advance its principles. He was indeed one of its fathers. No citizen who has acted with that party will question the greatness of his service to it; no citizen who opposed that party will deny it. The personal assault upon him in the Senate, following his prodigious defense of the Republican position and policy, and soon after the first national nominations of the party, made him throughout the inspiring summer of 1856, to the imagination of the twelve hundred thousand men who voted for its candidates, the very type and illustration of their hope and purpose. Nothing less than such humanity in the national policy and such lofty character in public life as were expressed by the name of Charles Sumner was the aim of the great political awakening of that time. The rank and file of the party, to borrow a military phrase, dressed upon Sumner; and long afterward, when party differences had arisen, I am sure that I spoke for the great body of his political associates when I said to one who indignantly regretted his course, that while at that time and under those circumstances we could not approve his judgment, yet there were thousands and thousands of men who would be startled and confused to find themselves marching in a political campaign out of step with Charles Sumner. Thus he satisfied the second imperative condition of leadership of which I speak as a conspicuous and decided party chief.

But there were certain modifications of these conditions essential to the position, and these also were found in Sumner. Such was the felicity of his career that even his defects of constitution served to equip him more fully for his task. Thus, while it was indispensable under the circumstances that he should be a constitutional and international lawyer, it was no less essential that his mind should deal more with principles than with details, and with the spirit rather than the letter. He saw so clearly the great end to be achieved that he seemed sometimes almost to assume the means. Like an Alpine guide leading his company of travelers toward the pure and awful heights, with his eye fixed upon their celestial beauty, and his soul breathing an

"Ampler ether, a diviner air,"

he moved straight on, disdaining obstacles

that would have perplexed a guide less absolutely absorbed, and who by moments of doubt and hesitation would have imperiled every thing.

Thus his legal mind, in the pursuit of a moral end, had sometimes what I may call a happy lack of logic. Sure of his end, and that every thing ought to make for it, he felt that every thing did make for it. For instance, his first great public oration, upon the "True Grandeur of Nations," was a most powerful presentation of the glory and beauty of peace, and a mighty denunciation of the horrors and wrongs of war. It was an intrepid and impressive discourse, and its influence will be deep and lasting. But it overstated its own case. It exposed the citizen soldier not only to ridicule, but to moral aversion. And yet the young men who sat in martial array before the orator had not submitted to military discipline merely for the splendor of a parade, but that in the solemn and exigent hour they might the more effectively defend the public safety and private honor, the school and the hospital, and social order itself, the only guarantee of peace, and all this not at the arbitrary command of their own will, but by the lawful and considered word of the civil power. What is military force which he derided but, in the last resort, the law which he revered, in execution? As a friend asked him, are the judgments of Story and of Shaw advice merely? Do they not, if need be, command every bayonet in the State? Is force wrong, and must the policeman not only be prohibited from carrying a pistol or a club, but must he be forbidden to lay his hand upon the thief in the act to compel him to the station? The young citizen soldiers who sat before the orator were simply the ultimate police. To decry to them with resounding and affluent power the practice which covered war with a false lustre was a noble service, but to do it in a way that would forbid the just and lawful punishment of a murderer disclosed a defective logic. Thus Sumner sometimes used arguments that were two-edged swords, apt to wound the wielder as well as the enemy. And so he sometimes adopted propositions of constitutional or international law which led straight to his moral end, but which would hardly have endured the legal microscope. Yet he maintained them with such fervor of conviction, such an array of precedent, such amplitude of illustration, that to the great popular mind, morally exalted like his own, his statements had the majesty and the conclusiveness of demonstrations.

And this, again, was what the time needed. The debate was essentially, although under the forms of law, revolutionary. It aimed at the displacement not only of an administration, but of a theory of the government and of traditional usage that did not mean to yield without a struggle. It required, therefore, not the judicially logical mind, nor the fine touch of casuistry that splits and halts and defers until the cause is lost, but the mind so absolutely alive with the idea and fixed upon the end that it compels the means. John Pym was resolved that Strafford should be impeached, and he found the law for it. Charles Sumner was resolved that slavery should fall, and he found the Constitution for it. When the great debate ended, and there was the moment of dread silence before the outburst of civil war, the legal casuistry which had found the terrors of the Fugitive Slave Law constitutional could see no power in the Constitution to coerce States, Charles Sumner, who had found in the Constitution no authority for slave-hunting, answered the furious cannonade at Fort Sumter by declaring that slavery had legally destroyed itself, and by demanding immediate emancipation.

And as the crisis in which Sumner lived required that in a leader the qualities of a lawyer should be modified by those of the patriot and the moralist, so it demanded that the party man should be more than a partisan. He never forgot that a party is a means, not an end. He knew the joy and the power of association—no man better. He knew the history of parties every where—in Greece and Rome, in England and France, and in our own earlier day; and he knew how insensibly a party comes to resemble an army, and an army to stand for the country and cause which it has defended. But he knew above all that parties are kept pure and useful only by the resolute independence of their members, and that those leaders whom, from their lofty principle and uncompromising qualities, parties do not care to nominate are the very leaders who make parties able to elect their candidates. The Republican party was organized to withstand slavery when slavery dared all. It needed, therefore, one great leader at least who was not merely a partisan, who did not work for party ends, but for the ends of the party. It needed a man absorbed and mastered by hostility to slavery; a man of one idea, like Columbus, with his whole soul trembling ever to the west, wearying courts and kings and councils with his single incessant and importunate plea, until he sailed over the horizon, and gave a New World to the Old; a man of one idea, like Luther, pleading his private conscience against the ancient hierarchy, and giving both worlds religious liberty. Yes, a man of one idea. This was what the time demanded in public and party life, and this it found in Charles Sumner; not an antislavery man only, but a man in whose soul for thirty years the sigh of the slave never ceased, and whose dying words were a prayer to save the bill that made that slave wholly an equal citizen.

When the Republican party came into power it was forced to conduct a war in which the very same qualities were demanded. The public mind needed constantly to be roused and sustained by the trumpet note

of an ever higher endeavor, and from no leader did it hear that tone more steadily and clearly than from Sumner. When the most radical, which in such a moment is the wisest, policy came to be discussed in detailed measures, he had already robbed it of its terrors by making it familiar. While Congress declared by a vote almost unanimous that emancipation was not a purpose or an element of the war, Sumner proclaimed to the country that slavery was perpetual war, and that emancipation only was peace. Like Nelson in the battle of the Baltic—when the admiral signaled to stop fighting he put the glass to his blind eye and shouted, "I don't see the admiral's signal; nail my own colors to the mast for closer battle!" As before the war, so while it raged, he felt the imperial necessity of the conclusion so strongly that he made all arguments serve, and forced all facts into line. He was alive with the truth that Dryden nobly expresses: "I have heard, indeed, of some virtuous persons who have ended unfortunately, but never of any virtuous nation. Providence is engaged too deeply when the cause becomes so general." Mr. Lincoln, who was a natural diplomatist, fortunately understood Mr. Sumner. The President knew as well as the Senator that the war sprang from slavery. He had already said that the house of the Union divided against itself could not stand. He knew as well as Sumner that slavery must be smitten. But he knew also that in his position he could not smite until public opinion lifted his arm. To stimulate that opinion, therefore, was the most precious service to the President, to the country, and the world. Thus it was not the appeal to Lincoln, it was the appeal to public opinion that was demanded. It was not Sumner's direct but his reflected light that was so useful. And when the President at last raised his arm—for he pulled no unripe fruit, and he did nothing until he thought the time had fully come—he knew that the country was ready, and that no man more than Sumner had made it so. When the Assistant Secretary of State carried the engrossed copy of the Emancipation Proclamation to Mr. Lincoln to sign, he had been shaking hands all the morning, so that his writing was unsteady. He looked at it for a moment with his sadly humorous smile, and then said, "When people see that shaky signature they will say, 'See how uncertain he was.' But I was never surer of any thing in my life."

But while Sumner righteously stimulated public opinion during the war, not less on one memorable occasion did he righteously moderate it. I once ventured to ask Mr. Seward what in his judgment was the darkest hour of the war. He answered instantly, "The time that elapsed between my informally sending to Lord Lyons a draft of my reply in the *Trent* case and my hearing from him that it would be satisfactory." He thought it the darkest hour, because he knew that in that reply he had made the utmost concession that public opinion would tolerate, and if it were not satisfactory, nothing remained but war with England—a war which, Mr. Adams tells us, he thinks that the British government expected, and for which it had already issued naval instructions. Mr. Sumner, who was most friendly with Mr. Seward, was chairman of the Senate Committee of Foreign Relations, and, next to his constant and inspiring consciousness that he was a Senator of Massachusetts, his position as the head of that committee was the pride and glory of his official life. Few men in the country have ever been so amply fitted for it as he. From his youth he had been a student of international law. He was master of its history and literature. It was his hope—surely a noble ambition—to contribute to it something that might still further humanize the comity of nations. He was familiar with the current politics of the world, and he personally knew most of the distinguished foreign statesmen of his time. Above all, he brought to his chair the lofty conviction expressed by another master of international law, that "the same rules of morality which hold together men in families, and which form families into commonwealths, also link together those commonwealths as members of the great society of mankind." He was very proud of that chairmanship; and when, in the spring of 1871, upon the annual renewal of the committees of the Senate, his Republican colleagues decided not to restore him to his chair, he felt degraded and humiliated before the country and foreign powers. He had held it for ten years. His party was still in the ascendant. His qualifications were undeniable. And he felt that the refusal to restore him implied some deep distrust or dissatisfaction, for which, whatever good reasons existed, none but the pleasure of the Senate has yet been given to the country.

While he was still chairman, and at a critical moment, the seizure of the *Trent* was hailed with frantic applause. Nothing seemed less likely than that an administration could stand which should restore the prisoners, and Mr. Seward's letter was one of the ablest and most skillful that he ever wrote. Mr. Adams says frankly that in his judgment it saved the unity of the nation. But the impressive fact of the moment was the acquiescence of the country in the surrender, and that in great degree was due to the conclusive demonstration made by Mr. Sumner that fidelity to our own principles required the surrender. It was precisely one of the occasions when his value as a public man was plainly evident. From the crowded diplomatic gallery in the Senate attentive Europe looked and listened. His words were weighed one by one by men whom sympathy with his cause did not seduce, nor a too susceptible imagination betray, and who acknowledged when he ended not only that the nation had escaped war, and that

the action of the administration had been vindicated, but that the renown of the country had been raised by the clear and luminous statement of its humane and peaceful traditions of neutrality. "Until to-day," said one of the most accomplished of those diplomatists, "I have considered Mr. Sumner a doctrinaire; henceforth I recognize him as a statesman." He had silenced England by her historic self. He had justified America by her own honorable precedent. The country knew that he spoke from the fullest knowledge, and with the loftiest American and humane purpose, and his service in promoting national acquiescence in the surrender of the captives was as characteristic as in nerving the public mind to demand emancipation.

But while Mr. Sumner's public career was chiefly a relentless warfare with slavery, it was only because slavery was the present and palpable form of that injustice with which his nature was at war. The spring of his public life was that overpowering love of peace and justice and equality which spoke equally in his early Prison Discipline debates; in the Fourth of July oration in Boston; in his literary addresses; in the powerful antislavery speeches in the Senate; in his advocacy of emancipation as the true policy of the war, and of equal civil and political rights as the guarantee of its results; in his Senatorial efforts to establish arbitration; in his condemnation of privateering, prize-money, and letters of marque; in his arraignment of Great Britain for a policy which favored slavery; in his unflinching persistence for the Civil Rights Bill; in his last great protest against the annexation of San Domingo, and his denunciation of what he thought a cruel and un-American hostility to the republic of Hayti. He was a born warrior with public injustice.

Many public men permit their hostility to a wrong to be modified in its expression by personal feeling, and to reflect that good men, from the influence of birth and training, may sometimes support a wrong system. But Sumner saw in his opponents not persons, but a cause, and, like Socrates, in the battle he smote to the death, but with no personal hostility. In turn he was so identified with his own cause that he seemed to his opponents to be the very spirit with which they contended, visible, aggressive, arrogant. His tone in debate when he arraigned slavery, although he arraigned slavery alone, was so unsparing that all its supporters felt themselves to be personally insulted. After the war began I heard his speech in the Senate for the expulsion of Mr. Bright, of Indiana, for commerce with the enemy. It was a lash of scorpions. Mr. Bright sat in his place pale and livid by turns, and gazing at Mr. Sumner as if he could scarce restrain himself from springing at his throat. Yet when the orator shook his lifted finger at his colleague, and hurled at him his scathing sentences, it was not the man that he saw before him: he saw only the rebellion, only slavery in arms, with Catilinian audacity proudly thrusting itself into the Capitol, and daring to sit in the very Senate-chamber. But Mr. Sumner's attitude and tone that day, with a vast majority at his side, with a friendly army in the city, were no bolder, no more resolutely defiant, than when he stood in the same chamber demanding the expulsion of slavery from the statute-book, while the majority of his colleagues would fain have silenced him, and the city was a camp of his enemies.

It was often said that it was impossible he should know the peril of his position. It was not that. He did know it. But he saw and feared a greater peril—that of not doing his duty. He often stood practically alone among responsible public men. The spirit which begged Abraham Lincoln to strike out of his Springfield speech in 1858 the words "a house divided against itself can not stand," a request which Mr. Lincoln said that he would carefully consider, and having considered, spoke the words, and went straight on to the Presidency and a glorious renown—this spirit censured Sumner's fanaticism, his devotion to one idea; derided his rhetoric, his false taste, his want of logic; ridiculed his want of tact, his ignorance of men, his visionary views, his impracticability. Indeed, there were times when it almost seemed that friends joined with foes to shear Samson's flowing hair while Samson was smiting the Philistines. If friends remonstrated, he replied, "I am a public servant. I am a sentinel of my country. I must cry 'halt,' though it be only a shadow that passes, and not bring my piece to a rest until I know who goes there." It was an ideal vigilance, an ideal sense of duty. I grant it. He was an ideal character. He loved duty more than friendship, and he had that supreme quality of manhood, the power to go alone. I am not anxious to call him a statesman, but he seems to have measured more accurately than others the real forces of his time. Miss Martineau, in the remarkable paper published at the beginning of the war, says that every public man in the country with whom she talked agreed that silence upon slavery was the sole condition of preserving the Union. Sumner was the man who saw that silence would make the Union only the stately tomb of liberty; and that speech, constant, unsparing, unshrinking—speech ringing over a cowering land like an alarm-bell at midnight—was the only salvation of the Union as the home of freedom.

If now for a moment we turn to survey that public career, extending over the thirty stormiest years of our history, the one clear, conspicuous fact that appears in it, after the single devotion to one end, is that Mr. Sumner lived to see that end accomplished. He began by urging the Whig party to raise the antislavery standard. It refused. He left the party, and presently it

perished. He entered the Senate denouncing slavery in a manner that roused and strengthened the public mind for the contest that soon began. With the first gun of the war he demanded emancipation as the way of victory; and when victory with emancipation came, he advocated equal suffrage as the security of liberty. What public man has seen more glorious fulfillments of his aims and efforts? He did not, indeed, originate the laws that enacted the results, but he developed the spirit and the conviction that made the results possible. William the Third won few battles, but he gained his cause; Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration, but John Adams is the hero of American independence. Sumner was more a moral reformer than a statesman, and to a surprising degree events were his allies. But no man of our first great period, not Otis or Patrick Henry, nor Jefferson or Adams, nor Hamilton or Jay, is surer of his place than in the second great period Charles Sumner is sure of his.

As his career drew to an end, events occurred without which his life would not have been wholly complete, and the most signal illustration of the power of personal character in politics would have been lost. He was, as I have said, a party man. Although always in advance, and by his genius a moral leader, he had yet always worked with and by his party. But as the main objects of his political activity were virtually accomplished, he came to believe that his party, reckless in absolute triumph, was ceasing to represent that high and generous patriotism to which his life was consecrated, that its moral tone was sensibly declining, that it defended policies hostile to public faith and human rights, trusting leaders who should not be trusted, and tolerating practices that honest men should spurn. Believing that his party was forfeiting the confidence of the country, he reasoned with it and appealed to it, as more than twenty years before he had reasoned with the Whig party in Faneuil Hall. His hope was by his speeches on the San Domingo treaty and the French arms and the Presidential nomination to shake what he thought to be the fatal apathy of the party, and to stimulate it once more to resume its leadership of the conscience and the patriotism of the country. It was my fortune to see him constantly and intimately during those days, to know the persuasions and flatteries lavished upon him to induce him to declare openly against the party, and his resolution not to leave it until he had exhausted every argument and prayer, and conscience forbade him to remain. That summons came, in his judgment, when a nomination was made which seemed to him the conclusive proof of a fatal party infatuation. "Any thing else," he said to me, vehemently, a hundred times —"any other candidacy I can support, and it would save the party and the country." The nomination was made. He did not hesitate. He was sixty years old; smitten with sorrows that were not known; suffering at times acute agony from the disease of which he died; his heart heavy with the fierce strife of a generation, and longing for repose. But the familiar challenge of duty found him alert and watchful at his post, and he advanced without a doubt or a fear to what was undoubtedly the greatest trial of his life.

The antislavery contest, indeed, had closed many a door and many a heart against him; it had exposed him to the sneer, the hate, the ridicule, of opposition; it had threatened his life and assailed his person. But the great issue was clearly drawn; his whole being was stirred to its depths; he was in the bloom of youth, the pride of strength; history and reason, the human heart and the human conscience, were his immortal allies, and around him were the vast, increasing hosts of liberty; the men whose counsels he approved; the friends of his heart; the multitude that thought him only too eager for unquestionable right; the prayer of free men and women sustaining, inspiring, blessing him. But here was another scene, a far fiercer trial. His old companions in the Free-soil days, the great abolition leaders, most of his warmest personal friends, the great body of the party whom his words had inspired, looked at him with sorrowful surprise. Ah! no one who did not know that proud and tender heart, trusting, simple, almost credulous as that of a boy, could know how sore the trial was. He stood, among his oldest friends, virtually alone; with inexpressible pain they parted, each to his own duty. "Are you willing," I said to him one day, when he had passionately implored me to agree with him—and I should have been unworthy his friendship had I been silent—"is Charles Sumner willing at this time, and in the circumstances of to-day, to intrust the colored race in this country, with all their rights, their liberty newly won and yet flexile and nascent, to a party, however fair its profession, which comprises all who have hated and despised the negro? The slave of yesterday in Alabama, in Carolina, in Mississippi, will his heart leap with joy or droop dismayed when he knows that Charles Sumner has given his great name as a club to smite the party that gave him and his children their liberty?" The tears started to his eyes, that good gray head bowed down, but he answered, sadly, "I must do my duty." And he did it. He saw the proud, triumphant party that he had led so often, men and women whom his heart loved, the trusted friends of a life, the sympathy and confidence and admiration upon which, on his great days and after his resounding words, he had been joyfully accustomed to lean—he saw all these depart, and he turned to go alone and do his duty.

Yet, great as was his sorrow, still greater, as I believe, was his content in doing that duty. His State, indeed, could not follow

him. For the first time in his life, he went one way, and Massachusetts went the other. But Massachusetts was as true to her convictions of duty in that hour as he was to his own. It was her profound belief that the result he sought would be perilous if not fatal to the welfare of the country. But the inspiring moral of these events is this, that while deploring his judgment in this single case, and while, later, the Legislature, misconceiving his noble and humane purpose, censured him for the resolutions which the people of the State did not understand, and which they believed, most unjustly to him, to be somehow a wrong to the precious dead, the flower of a thousand homes—yet, despite all this, the great heart of Massachusetts never swerved from Charles Sumner. It was grieved and amazed, and could not forego its own duty because he saw another. But I know that when in that year I spoke in rural Massachusetts, whether in public or in private, to those who, with me, could not follow him, nothing that I said was heard with more sympathy and applause than my declaration of undying honor and gratitude to him. "I seem to lean on the great heart of Massachusetts," he said, in the bitterest hour of the conflict of his life. And it never betrayed him. In that heart not the least suspicion of a mean or selfish motive ever clouded his image—not a doubt of his absolute fidelity to his conscience disturbed its faith; and had he died a year ago, while yet the censure of the Legislature was unrepealed, his body would have been received by you with the same affectionate reverence; here, and in Faneuil Hall, and at the State-house, all honor that boundless gratitude and admiration could lavish would have been poured forth, and yonder in Mount Auburn he would have been laid to rest with the same immense tenderness of sorrow.

This is the great victory, the great lesson, the great legacy of his life, that the fidelity of a public man to conscience, not to party, is rewarded with the sincerest popular love and confidence. What an inspiration to every youth longing with generous ambition to enter the great arena of the state, that he must heed first and always the divine voice in his own soul, if he would be sure of the sweet voices of good fame! Living, how Sumner served us! and dying, at this moment how he serves us still! In a time when politics seem peculiarly mean and selfish and corrupt, when there is a general vague apprehension that the very moral foundations of the national character are loosened, when good men are painfully anxious to know whether the heart of the people is hardened, Charles Sumner dies; and the universality and sincerity of sorrow, such as the death of no man left living among us could awaken, show how true, how sound, how generous, is still the heart of the American people. This is the dying service of Charles Sumner, a revelation which inspires every American to bind his shining example as a frontlet between the eyes, and never again to despair of the higher and more glorious destiny of his country.

And of that destiny what a foreshowing was he! In that beautiful home at the sunny and leafy corner of the national city, where he lived among books and pictures and noble friendships and lofty thoughts—the home to which he returned at the close of each day in the Senate, and to which the wise and good from every land naturally came—how the stately and gracious and all-accomplished man seemed the very personification of that new union for which he had so manfully striven, and whose coming his dying eyes beheld—the union of ever wider liberty and juster law, the America of comprehensive intelligence, and of moral power! For that he stands; up to that his imperishable memory, like the words of his living lips, forever lifts us—lifts us to his own great faith in America and in man. Suddenly from his strong hand—my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!—the banner falls. Be it ours to grasp it, and carry it still forward, still higher! Our work is not his work, but it can be well done only in his spirit. And as in the heroic legend of your western valley the men of Hadley, faltering in the fierce shock of Indian battle, suddenly saw at their head the lofty form of an unknown captain, with white hair streaming on the wind, by his triumphant mien strengthening their hearts and leading them to victory, so, men and women of Massachusetts, of America, if in that national conflict already begun, as vast and vital as the struggle of his life, the contest which is beyond that of any party, or policy, or measure—the contest for conscience, intelligence, and morality as the supreme power in our politics and the sole salvation of America—you should falter or fail, suddenly your hearts shall see once more the towering form, shall hear again the inspiring voice, shall be exalted with the moral energy and faith of Charles Sumner, and the victories of his immortal example shall transcend the triumphs of his life.

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